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27 November 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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SUBJECT: Interim Assembly, 20 November 1954, at High Point.

1. Pursuant to a prearranged plan, I departed for High Point at 8:00 a.m. on 20 November 1954 to participate in the Interim Assembly on behalf of the Director of Central Intelligence. Each Cabinet member was either present or represented at a Cabinet group table and those members or their representatives whom I was able to identify are checked in red on the attached list.

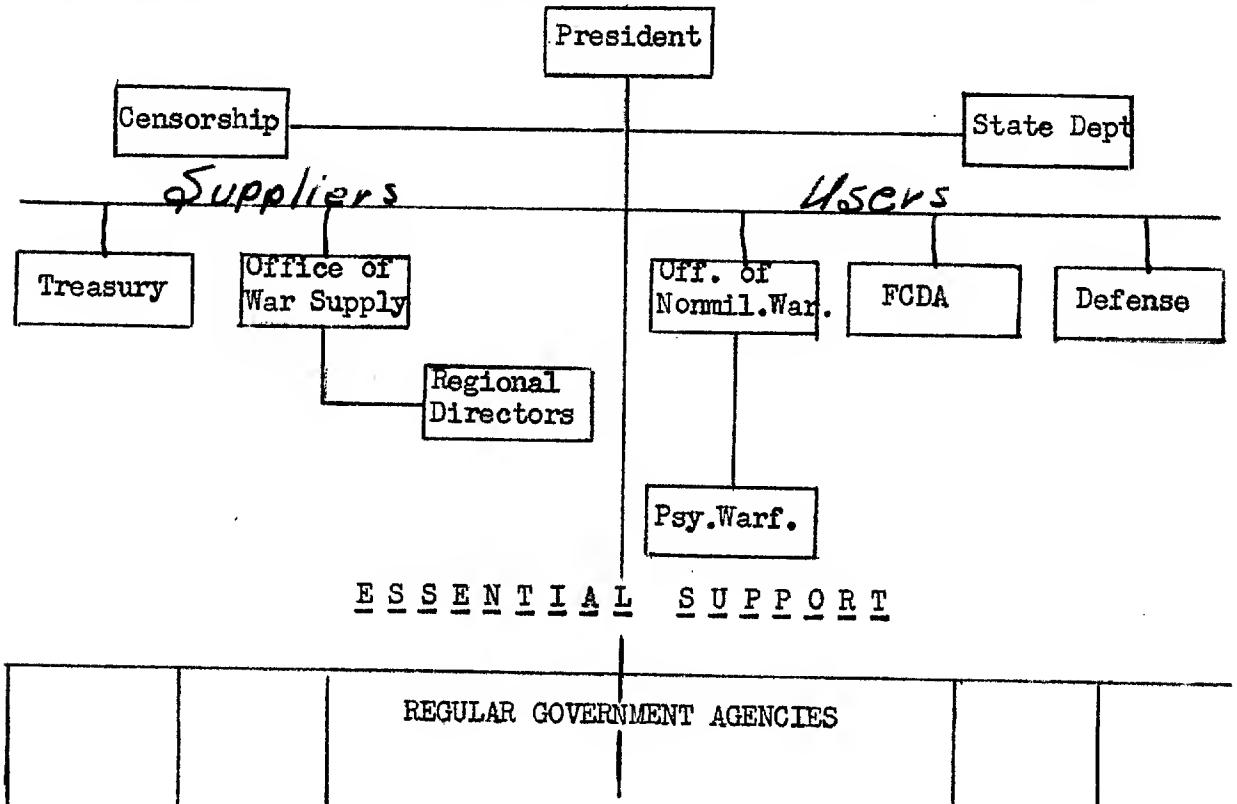
2. After the preliminaries were finished, i.e., checking in, arranging for lunch, and reaching the Interim Assembly Room, the exercise proper started at 10:30 a.m. at which time a two-way television communication with the President began. Mr. Arthur Flemming, Director, Office of Defense Mobilization, was in charge of the whole exercise and proceeded by greeting the President and explaining to him the purpose of our meeting. Television cameras were focused on all those present so that the President might see who was there to participate. The President advised that he had expected to attend this exercise but that his security people had recommended against it. However, he stated that he had taken part in activities of this type all of his life and had found them to be very profitable if one injected himself into the situation with a true spirit of realism.

3. Immediately following the brief exchange with the President, Rear Admiral Thomas H. Robbins, Jr. of the Joint Chiefs of Staff gave a presentation as to what the Soviet Union was capable of delivering in the form of an all-out, one-shot air attack and the capability of the United States to defend itself, thereby concluding with a net estimate of damage done under these assumed conditions as of mid-1957. Subsequent simulated actions taken by the various groups participating in this exercise were, therefore, based upon this net estimate of damage inflicted.

4. Following Admiral Robbins' presentation there were several questions. Of particular interest to CIA was a question by Secretary of Agriculture Benson as to whether or not the possibility of damage inflicted through bacteriological warfare means had been considered in this estimate. Admiral Robbins replied by saying, in substance, that such a possibility had not been overlooked but that inasmuch as CIA "estimates" people had advised that information available on this subject was so inadequate as to prevent a realistic appraisal it, consequently, had not been taken into consideration. (I have reported this question and answer to the Director.)

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5. At the afternoon session the assemblage was divided into working groups and I participated with the Cabinet group which devoted most of its time to a discussion of the wartime organization of the Executive Branch of the Government. This was predicated on the following three principles which had been established by the President: (a) If General Eisenhower is President in an emergency which requires all-out mobilization he would expect to use emergency agencies to cope with the situation whether it be all-out mobilization or war; (b) He would desire that the number of persons reporting to him be held to an absolute minimum; and (c) He would desire a clear division between "users" and "suppliers" of materiel which would be needed to cope with the emergency. An organization which the Office of Defense Mobilization and the Bureau of the Budget have been studying in this connection is very roughly sketched below.



6. It was the clear consensus that regional directors in various parts of the United States would be essential in coordinating the activities of the Government and Secretaries Hobby and Benson, among others, urged that they be selected now and given training as to what their responsibilities would encompass in time of emergency. Admiral Strauss and several others seemed to think

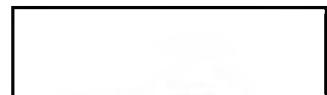
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that there would have to be a provision made for a referee in order to settle disputes which would be inevitable between "users" and "suppliers." I gathered that it was their clear opinion that this organization was weak in this regard. Admiral Strauss also suggested that one additional box be added which might be called the "Office for Peace Planning." His idea was that someone during the entire emergency should be concentrating on the question of what to do when the emergency was over and how to unwind in an orderly way all of the machinery which had been set into motion in order to avoid the disintegration process which took place after World War II. In response to a question as to where the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, etc., fitted into this chart, Mr. Flemming stated that as of now they were still under the Office of the President but that this was something which had not been worked out and would be attended to forthwith.

7. While the discussion made it clear to me that this organization was designed to administer the materiel and manpower support which would be needed, I noted with interest the thought being given toward the Office of Nonmilitary Warfare and, particularly, the contemplated Psychological Warfare effort which would fall thereunder. This is something in which CIA would, according to its present charter, have a very definite interest and which would require the closest kind of cooperation. (I have also reported this to the Director.)

8. The exercise terminated promptly at 3:30 p.m.

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L. K. WHITE
Deputy Director
(Administration)

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